

**Djerf Avenue's Pajama Fight:
A case of online duplicates**

MANAGEMENT DECISIONS

The authors prepared this case solely as a basis for class discussion and not as an endorsement, a source of primary data, or an illustration of effective or ineffective management. Although based on real events and despite occasional references to actual companies, this case is fictitious and any resemblance to actual persons or entities is coincidental.

The first reaction (7th of October 2023)

Reporting and taking down videos

On the 7th of October 2023, Djerf Avenue found itself embroiled in controversy over its response to the appearance of dupe pajamas featuring its iconic fruity print on online websites. However, it makes sense to fight the producers of these pajamas, Djerf Avenue took another approach. They started to file copyright strikes against the small content creators on TikTok who highlighted the Djerf Avenue dupe products (Macdonald, 2023). As a result, these individual creators, referring to alternative products to Djerf Avenue's clothing line, saw their videos being removed by TikTok due to alleged copyright violations. By doing this, the small content creators were punished, rather than the manufacturers, over the dupes, and as a result, their social media careers and sources of income were threatened.

While the duplications were probably illegal, and Djerf Avenue had the right to be concerned about these products regarding intellectual property, the aggressive reaction of the brand left a sour taste among its loyal customers (Macdonald, 2023). These negative sentiments were even more pushed by the hashtag #djerfavedrama, which was spread on TikTok and got around 1.5 million views. Online debates were started about the brand's tactics where Djerf Avenue got both opponents as well as advocates. Lundström Halbert, a critic of Djerf Avenue's methods, refers to the reaction as "biting the hand that feeds you" (Tolentino, 2023) since the company targeted individuals from Djerf's fanbase instead of the alleged dupe manufacturers.

Critics find that the brand's actions are hypocritical since Djerf's designs have similarities with other brands as well. This highlights the challenges of balancing the protection of creativity with the promotion of innovation within the fashion industry.

The follow-up reactions (a couple of days later)

Social media post

Djerf Avenue posted a message on its socials alerting its fanbase to the proliferation of websites selling products featuring their designs and owned prints. While the company aimed to underscore the importance of safeguarding its prints and supporting individual print designers, it can face a notable risk of inadvertently amplifying the visibility of these dupe products.

In its online statement, Djerf Avenue began with an acknowledgment of the issue, stating, "Unfortunately, there has been a recent surge in websites selling products with our copyrighted prints and owned prints/artworks" (Mitchell, 2023). The brand also made it clear that its prints are copyrighted under the company name 'Matildadjerf

design AM', emphasizing its commitment to enforcing its intellectual property rights. The statement further clarified their stance: "Any types of videos/content with our prints that are used on non-Djerf Avenue items, such as 'dupes', will automatically be reported due to copyright infringement by our IP firm and is consistently removed by content platforms in accordance with their infringement policies" (Mitchell, 2023).

No apologies but a changed approach

After facing online backlash on social media due to Djerf Avenue's initial reaction to the dupes, the brand announced a shift in its approach to the recent copyright infringement incident (Tolentino, 2023). They stated their intention to redirect their focus from individual accounts to the sellers and manufacturers of duplicate products. While the brand did not issue a direct apology, it acknowledged that its actions had unintentionally impacted small content creators' accounts. These creators voiced concerns that copyright claims resulted in their videos being deprioritized, adversely affecting their part-time social media jobs (Macdonald, 2023).

Moreover, Djerf Avenue emphasized its commitment to engaging in dialogue with content creators associated with dupe products rather than immediately resorting to reporting (Tolentino, 2023). This approach reflects their effort to address concerns while maintaining open communication with the community.

The help of an external IP company

Amidst the rapid pace of the fashion industry, Djerf Avenue opted to enlist the assistance of an external intellectual property (IP) firm to monitor instances on their behalf. While this collaboration was already in place, it became particularly crucial during the crisis of copyright infringements (Macdonald, 2023). By partnering with this external firm, Djerf Avenue made a decisive long-term decision.

Related to this specific case, Djerf Avenue blames the external IP firm for reporting and taking down the TikTok videos of small content creators (Mitchell, 2023). The brand acknowledges that these actions were unwarranted and that Matilda knew nothing about the situation. This communication shifts responsibility to the IP firm, potentially inviting further questions and criticism. This approach also raises concerns about the nature of their collaboration, as they do not present themselves as a unified team.

Deactivated TikTok account

Matilda Djerf, the owner of Djerf Avenue, was also under fire regarding the copyright strikes (Macdonald, 2023). Initially, Djerf's team responded by hiding and filtering

comments on her TikTok videos, but the situation escalated when her account was deactivated entirely (Mitchell, 2023). This action effectively silenced Matilda amidst the backlash removing her from public scrutiny. It remains unclear whether Matilda's team or TikTok itself decided to deactivate her account. Despite the controversy, Matilda did not comment on the matter on Instagram, where she continued to post regularly.

The aftermath of the crisis

To gain a deeper understanding of Djerf Avenue's past choices, it is instructive to examine the impact of their responses and focus on the brand's recovery and current status. After the online controversy subsided, Matilda promptly reactivated her account and resumed normal activities, seemingly unfazed by the ordeal. Now, nearly five months later, the company is thriving, which could be attributed in part to their loyal fanbase. However, they continue to face criticism, particularly regarding their pricing, which is not uncommon in the digital environment we live in.

In conclusion, Djerf Avenue has emerged from recent challenges relatively unscathed, with both their sales and Matilda's fanbase showing continued growth. Their success can be attributed to their strategic positioning between fast fashion and luxury fashion, offering a distinct Scandinavian style that resonates with fashion enthusiasts (Chan, 2024). Furthermore, their dedication to size inclusivity reflects their non-discriminatory and body-positive mindset, setting them apart in the industry. Looking ahead, Djerf Avenue is set for additional growth and innovation, as highlighted by Matilda in her interview with Forbes. She stated, 'I'm really excited about 2024 because there's going to be a special launch happening this Spring. It's an entirely new thing, and it feels like an adventure. The launch will occur exclusively in New York initially, with a pop-up celebration' (Chan, 2024). Additionally, Djerf Avenue currently has several pop-up stores and plans to expand further, with ambitions to open new locations in cities like London and Oslo.

References

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